

USAID Conference  
Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Reintegration  
in Post-conflict Societies  
October 30-31, 1997

---

**Lessons and Guidance for Donors**

**Key Points from the Development Assistance  
Committee's Guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and  
Development Cooperation<sup>1</sup>**

**by Bernard Wood**

*The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not of USAID.*

## **Background to the DAC Effort**

At the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) High Level Meeting in May 1995, development cooperation ministers and heads of aid agencies focused on the growing demands and opportunities for development cooperation to contribute more pro-actively to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. The OECD Committee decided to launch a program of work with three aims:

- # to draw out lessons from experience on the linkages between conflict, peace, and development cooperation
- # to seek ways to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence of members' efforts in these areas
- # to provide practical policy guidance to those called on to design and implement programs in these complex, often ground-breaking areas.

The DAC established a special task force for this purpose in late 1995<sup>2</sup>. One of the principal tasks of this group was to develop guidelines in the areas of conflict, peace, and development cooperation. The task force work has drawn primarily on the operational experience of development cooperation agencies and the knowledge and expertise of outside experts and practitioners, as well as the growing body of academic research in these fields. The topic areas covered were selected as issues of particular concern in the design and implementation of development cooperation for conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery. They ranged from broad policy questions to more technical and operational areas of assistance.

The Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation worked intensively over some 18 months and arrived at a wide range of good practices and new approaches to recommend. The guidelines were accepted by the DAC High Level Meeting in May 1997, together with a covering policy statement by ministers and heads of agencies. The following presentation distills some of the key points from this whole body of work.

### **Principles for Peace building and Reconciliation through Development Cooperation**

Development cooperation can play an important role in conflict prevention and Peace building, and work in war-torn or conflict-prone countries must be seen as an integral part of the cooperation challenge. Wars have severely set back development in many countries, including some of the poorest, and responses to complex emergencies have come to represent a major claim on development cooperation budgets. More fundamentally, helping strengthen the capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence must be seen as a foundation for sustainable development.

Humanitarian assistance cannot substitute for sustained political commitment and action

to avert crisis and support peace. Humanitarian agencies increasingly have encountered moral dilemmas as they have attempted to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations in conflict situations. The humanitarian community cannot be the sole vehicle for response to complex crises. Development cooperation must play its role in conflict prevention, Peace building, and reconciliation, alongside the full range of other instruments available to the international community—economic, social, legal, environmental, and military. All the instruments the international community can bring to bear on the root causes of these crises are required. There is a clear need for international responses that are more coordinated, coherent and integrated—between governments, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Developing countries are ultimately responsible for their own development. This cardinal principle of development cooperation must be respected—even in countries in crisis, and even when division is rife and local capacities are severely weakened. The task of international assistance is to help strengthen a country's indigenous capacities. This must be done in ways that are even-handed and that encourage broad participation throughout society. This also means ensuring that programs address the special needs of women and children, who often bear the brunt of the consequences of conflict.

Although prolonged economic decline itself can be a source of conflict, economic growth alone does not prevent or resolve violent conflict, and can sometimes even intensify tensions in society. Development cooperation efforts should strive for an environment of "structural stability" as a basis for sustainable development. This concept embraces the mutually reinforcing objectives of social peace, respect for human rights, accountable military forces and broadly shared social and economic development; supported by dynamic and representative political structures capable of managing change and resolving disputes through peaceful means.

### **Special Roles of Development Cooperation in Different Phases of Conflict and Peace**

Experience has confirmed that deep-rooted societal conflicts do not follow any standard, predictable patterns or cycles. Many of the measures for conflict prevention and peace building may also be useful in reaching durable peace after a violent conflict. Bearing in mind the need for flexible approaches, it is useful to chart here some of the main lines of action for development cooperation in different phases of conflict. A primary objective of development cooperation in every phase is to enhance the rule of law and promote popular participation in democratic processes. (Critical areas of assistance are outlined in the guidelines.)

The task force found that development assistance will have the most impact in addressing conflict when it is designed and timed to address the root causes of violent conflicts, in ways that are relevant to local circumstances. Within overall efforts by the international community to promote peace building and conflict prevention, development assistance programs will find their most important role in promoting the democratic stability of societies. Where tensions have not escalated into violence, a great number of possible measures can be geared to help defuse the

potential for violent conflict. These range from more traditional areas of assistance, such as economic growth and poverty reduction programs, to democratization, good governance (including justice and security systems) and respect for human rights. There is growing interest in innovative activities to strengthen mechanisms for enhancing security at lower levels of armaments and military expenditures.

Where organized armed violence has wound down but where it is still unclear if the situation will again deteriorate, it is important to move beyond saving lives to saving livelihoods, and at the same time helping transform a fragile process into a sustainable, durable peace in which the causes of conflict are diminished and incentives for peace are strengthened. Where ethnic or even genocidal violence has occurred, concerted effort will be needed to help overcome the enduring trauma, promote reconciliation, and help prevent renewed outbreaks of violent conflict.

When civil authority has broken down, the first priority is to restore a sense of security. This includes restoring legitimate government institutions that are regarded by citizens as serving all groups and that are able to allay persisting tensions, while carrying out the challenging and costly tasks of rebuilding. Efforts by developing countries and international assistance must fit within the context of a sound, even if rudimentary, macroeconomic stabilization plan. Post-conflict situations often provide special opportunities for political, legal, economic, and administrative reforms to change past systems and structures that may have contributed to economic and social inequities and conflict. Initiatives for participatory debate and assessment of the role of the military in relation to the state and civil society have been productive in post-conflict settings. In the wake of conflict, donors should seize opportunities to help promote and maintain the momentum for reconciliation and needed reforms.

In situations of open conflict, other policy instruments such as humanitarian assistance, diplomatic initiatives, and political or economic measures tend to move to the forefront of the international response. Contrary to many past assumptions, we have found that a sharp distinction between short-term emergency relief and longer-term development aid is rarely useful in planning support for countries in open conflict. Development cooperation agencies operating in conflict zones, respecting security concerns and the feasibility of operations, can continue to identify the scope for supporting development processes even in the midst of crisis, be prepared to seize on opportunities to contribute to conflict resolution, and continue to plan and prepare for post-conflict reconstruction.

The guidelines are primarily concerned with the role of development cooperation, but some activities and approaches described in this summary of key findings involve broader areas of international assistance and cooperation. The rules and procedures governing the use of development assistance funds will determine the extent to which development agencies can be used to fulfil these Guidelines. Nevertheless, examining the issues from a more integrated perspective should help promote greater coherence and coordination amongst all the actors involved.

## **Foundations for Peace building: Good Governance and Civil Society**

### **Basic Principles**

Peace building involves both long-term preventive measures and more immediate responses before, during, and after conflict. It depends on and, at the same time, seeks to foster a spirit of tolerance and reconciliation. Broad acceptance throughout society of the legitimacy of the state and the credibility of the institutions of governance is a key aspect of forging such a civic spirit. When human rights are respected, when society is governed by the rule of law, and when ordinary men and women are involved in the political process, resort to violence to effect political change is obviously less likely. Efforts to support participation, democratisation and peace building, through strengthened institutions of governance, are clearly interlinked.

In countries divided by inter-group conflict, certain elements of civil society may be able to play an important role in building bridges between polarized groups, promoting dialogue and reconciliation. Conditions of insecurity, sometimes aggravated by the exploitation of ethnic, religious, and cultural differences, contribute to a climate of social distrust. However, sociopolitical conflict itself can also provide a stimulus for the emergence of new actors and institutions specifically dedicated to the cause of peace. These can include human rights networks, peace activist groups, and independent media organizations. Other stabilization points or "voices of peace" can be found among community and religious leaders, traditional forms of authority, in trade unions and professional associations.

Women can play special roles as bridging partners in dialogue, peace negotiations, reconstruction, and rehabilitation strategies and contribute their special experience and perceptions to peace-building and reconciliation efforts. In many instances, women's organizations can help in preventing and ending hostilities by acting as informal negotiators, lobby groups, campaigners, and demonstrators. Women often have less inhibition and more legitimacy than militarized men in protesting against violent conflict and pushing for peace.

In the case of "failed states," or in countries where certain areas are controlled by nongovernment or antigovernment authorities, local level, nonstate mechanisms may be the most effective means through which peace building and conflict management can be animated. Even though not all elements of civil society necessarily work toward peace, the opportunities often exist, even in crises, for a society to develop and strengthen commonly held values and goals. By identifying and supporting key actors and mechanisms dedicated to peace and reconciliation at the community level, and avoiding inadvertent support to "forces of war," donors can make an effective contribution to peace building.

### **Building Blocks for Peace Building and Reconciliation**

Given their sensitive and complex nature, governance-oriented assistance programs need a strong base of political commitment in both donor and recipient countries over the long term.

Assistance efforts should consistently emphasize the strengthening of partner-countries' own capacities for good governance. Mechanisms to help strengthen political will for reform in partner countries often involve elements of policy dialog and incentives. The *DAC Orientations on Participatory Development and Good Governance*, Development Cooperation Guidelines Series, OECD 1995, provide a sound framework for these efforts. In discussing the design of development cooperation programs with partner countries, donors can, without proselytizing or understating the complexities, consistently emphasize the need for good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, and the development of a strong civil society, as a basis for long-term stability.

The various elements in a vigorous civil society do not necessarily set out to achieve a broad consensus. Yet the chances for a society to develop and strengthen commonly held values and goals, and the ability and willingness of the individual to participate in mainstream society are vital components of peace building and sustainable development. In the longer term, donors can contribute to this through, among other activities:

- # support to government institutions and other organizations, including the business community, which are able to establish or maintain social networks enhancing participation in mainstream society, or who support commonly shared values, such as cultural and athletic programs
- # support for access to information through education, and institutions such as citizens advice bureaus, and local media
- # support to local NGOs and community-based organizations to help them become more capable and responsive to their constituencies

Although DAC members usually rely to the maximum extent on measures of positive support, they may need to call on persuasion and policy dialog when working with some partner governments to promote constructive steps toward improved governance. Policy criteria focused on promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and good governance should be integrated in a wider range of development assistance programs in this area.

The most basic tenets of democratic practice require broad acceptance by the state and civil society. Democratization is thus a complex, gradual, and participatory process whereby citizens, civil society, and the state create a set of norms, values, and institutions to mediate their relationships in a predictable, representative, and fair manner. Development cooperation efforts in support of improved governance and participation must be framed over the long-term horizon, based on coherent strategies consistently applied by different donors and multilateral agencies. This requires effective coordination among all actors involved in the design and implementation of programs.

Approaches to governance must be adapted to national circumstances. For example,

when dealing with authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states, the scope for constructive dialog may be severely limited, and donors may have to restrict their assistance to nongovernmental sectors committed to reform. In the case of countries in transition to democratic systems, support may concentrate on strengthening civil society actors and democratic political processes. Donors must also be careful to avoid precipitating political and economic instability through pressing too sudden an introduction of democratic institutions.

## **Respect For Human Rights**

The fundamental freedoms that should be protected by the rule of law are essential for healthy relations between the state and civil society.

DAC members must support the international principles contained in the UN Charter, and elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Vienna Declaration (1994). They must also comply with the provisions of the international and regional conventions to which they have adhered, such as the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) the Red Cross Conventions (Geneva 1949) in the field of humanitarian law, and the Additional Protocols (1977), which aim to provide protection to persons not taking an active part in conflict and to the victims of conflicts, as well as the Convention on the Status of Refugees (Geneva 1951). More generally, internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms should be explicitly promoted and supported through development cooperation and humanitarian aid initiatives and policy dialog.

Active nongovernmental interest groups can be important vehicles for donor initiatives in support of human rights, by providing information in a given country and building a constituency for promoting human rights vis-à-vis governments and public opinion. Similarly, targeting groups that are close to or represent the victims of injustice and misuse of power can also be effective (such as women's groups, farmer cooperatives). Channelling aid through effective international NGOs benefits from their influence, professionalism, and neutrality, and local human rights groups may gain protection and enhanced capacity through association with international networks.

Donor assistance in this area should be used as part of a wider promotion of just and sustainable development, providing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups with knowledge about their human and legal rights, as well as the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. Efforts to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights must place emphasis on the institutions and processes which formulate and interpret law and social policy (legislatures and courts), as well as on those which implement and enforce them (government departments, police forces, military actors). Experience has shown these approaches work best when integrated into an overall strategy, rather than in isolation.

## **Democratic Processes**

Fostering popular participation in the governance agenda is essential to peace building. Participation strengthens civil society and the economy by empowering individuals, communities, and organizations to negotiate with institutions and bureaucracies, thus allowing civil society to influence public policy and to provide a check on the power of government. Participation also aids in dealing with conflicting interests in a peaceful manner. It follows that the creation of a climate and the capacity for constructive interaction between civil society and government is a critical component for long-term peace building.

Democratization enables a population to articulate its needs and interests and to protect the rights and interests of marginalized groups and the most vulnerable. A democratic system also provides mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including the distribution of political and economic power, and mechanisms for legitimately transferring political control. By supporting and consolidating democratic institutions, which include political parties and representative bodies, donors can contribute to building peace and stability.

### **Strengthening Systems of Security and Justice**

To be effective, justice systems, including security forces, must recognize and protect the rights of the individual and be accessible to all. They must be impartial and politically independent. Ineffective justice and security systems may encourage people to take the law into their own hands. As elements of security and justice systems can have an important role to play in conflict prevention, international assistance in these areas can be very potent elements of conflict prevention and development strategies.

Successful support in these areas depends on the willingness of the recipient government to accept the need for, and recognize the value of, effective justice systems to overall good governance, social stability and harmony, and good economic management. Dialog with governments may be required to persuade them of the advantages of effective, internationally sanctioned norms of law and justice. Security and justice systems are basic responsibilities of the state and are at the core of a country's sovereignty. Efforts should not undermine but rather strengthen respect for the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of force within the rule of law.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of their assistance, donors must have a broad awareness of their agencies' and nations' skills, experience, and cultural background, which may indicate how best to target development assistance. Donors should also draw on the knowledge and expertise of a range of fields, including foreign affairs, defense, and development cooperation.

### **Reinforcing Civil Society for Peace building and Reconciliation**

The institutions of civil society play a vital function in representing different interest groups, but when they confront resistance or inadequate accommodation processes, heightened tensions, oppression and increased levels of violence can result. Support to civil society should maintain the objective of helping to reconcile group interests over the longer-term. "Citizen



diplomacy" at various levels can provide capacities for this reconciliation. In regions of latent or manifest violence, actors within civil society may be inhibited by intimidation or attack from playing a peace-building role. Information and communication networks may be especially vulnerable. Group divisions may also be exacerbated and special efforts may be required to help protect the human rights of people in minority situations. However, these same conditions may also generate the impetus for the emergence of new actors and institutions, such as human rights networks and peace activist groups. In certain circumstances this may also include the re-emergence of traditional forms of authority and techniques of conflict management and resolution.

While seeking to identify sources of peace-building strength in society, development agencies need to be alert to the risk that their support for particular social institutions and authorities can be misused, misrepresented, or misunderstood. Some traditional groups may be elitist and oppressive; some NGOs or other local groups may be instruments of contending factions. These alternative or supplementary peace-building agents should be subjected to the same scrutiny that the work of other "partner" institutions typically receive, and their most positive aspects built upon.

Specific areas for donor support should include the following broad areas: a) promoting dialog and cooperation in divided societies; b) supporting the freedom of, and access to, information for all members of society; and c) supporting appropriate traditional institutions of authority.

## **Supporting Post-conflict Recovery: Operational Priorities**

### **Basic Principles**

The objective of post-conflict reconstruction is not to return to pre-crisis conditions but to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. When civil authority has broken down, the first priority is to restore legitimate state administration, regarded by its citizens as serving all groups and able to allay the tensions that inevitably persist in the post-conflict period.

Past systems and institutions may have contributed to creating economic and social inequities, and to fuelling conflict. Post-conflict situations provide special opportunities for political, economic, and administrative reform. Critical areas for action include: land tenure and administration, judicial practice, and internal security systems.

Whatever the phase of the conflict, donors should work to foster internal consensus on a set of appropriate policies and programs that reflect the economic, social, and cultural environment of the country concerned. National and local authorities or groups, including representatives of the parties in conflict, should participate in the formulation of programs, paving the way for national ownership of the development process.

From the outset of a political dialog on such critical issues as governance and participation, all groups, including the marginalized, should be encouraged to express themselves. Freedom of association and the encouragement of political parties need to be included in the political agenda. Public participation in the process of political reconstruction requires that the civil and human rights of the participants will be respected.

From an operational standpoint, priority areas of support for post-conflict reconstruction include helping to: restore internal security and the rule of law, legitimize state institutions, establish the basis for broadly based economic growth, and improve food security and social services. Countries may also require reforming security forces and legal systems or helping establish completely new structures where the former are viewed as illegitimate by society.

A number of other priority areas more uniquely related to the special needs of countries recovering from violent conflict are discussed in more detail in the Guidelines. These include reintegrating refugees and internally displaced persons, demobilizing former combatants and removing the threat of land mines, often a *sine qua non* for the normalisation of economic activities.

## **Priority Areas of Support**

### **Restoring Internal Security, State Institutions and Civil Society Participation**

The security of the individual and respect for basic human rights is the cornerstone of political and economic stabilization. Rebuilding credible institutions is vital at the central level as well as at the local and community levels, as they will have a determining influence on the entire reconstruction effort, ranging from the restoration of productive sectors of the economy, the return of capital, to the collection and disposal of weapons. Within their rules and procedures, and in concert with other forms of assistance, development cooperation should strive toward these broad goals.

Many aspects of the rule of law may need to be assisted in order for the overall system to become effective. They include: a) training of police, lawyers, and judges; and b) capacity building in the resolution of civil disputes, including those relating to property rights and access to land.

Peace agreements may also place national elections at the top of the political agenda. More generally, political institutions must again be seen as legitimate and competent. Elections are important mechanisms for establishing political legitimacy, but they do not in themselves create or sustain democracy. Democratization must be understood in the broader context of changing relations both within the government and civil society.

Another one of the most debilitating legacies of violent conflict is the polarization of social relations. Conditions of insecurity create lasting social distrust. Rebuilding bridges of communication between social groups and promoting participation in political life are essential

requirements for social reconciliation.

### **Improving Food Security and Social Services**

Improving food security is basic to any systematic approach to helping prevent conflict and to linking relief with disaster preparedness and sustainable development. This includes work to improve agricultural productivity, access to markets and distribution systems, and market-based measures to stabilize farm-gate prices. The restoration of basic services in health, education, water supply, and increased life opportunities for women and children are also essential priorities.

### **Building Administrative Capacity**

Whatever the urgency of addressing other needs, the development of technical and administrative capacity in the principal departments of government cannot be postponed without jeopardizing the sustainability of the reconstruction process. Where the shortage of skilled manpower is a critical constraint, it may be necessary for donors to make staff available to the government on a short-term secondment basis. As demonstrated in various UN-sponsored programs, it is sometimes also possible to mobilize members of exiled diasporas through special incentive programmes.

### **Special Needs of Countries Recovering from Conflict**

#### **Restoring a Working Capacity for Economic Management**

Countries in crisis or recovering from violent conflict urgently need to mobilize domestic and external financial resources for economic reconstruction in the face of exceptional constraints. Often critically short of expertise in macroeconomic management, newly established authorities also have to wrestle with competing demands of peace building and economic stabilization. The need to preserve peace and stability, rehabilitate essential infrastructure, reform public institutions, jump-start the economy, and create employment opportunities places heavy demands on budgetary resources. At the same time, the need for a stable, balanced economy and the restoration of private investors' confidence requires that inflationary pressures be contained.

The formulation of a sound—if rudimentary—macroeconomic framework for reconstruction is thus a priority. The objective should be to provide a realistic assessment of the cost of reconstruction and peace-building activities and ensure consistency with the resources likely to be available as well as the country's absorptive capacity. This would contribute to reducing the risk of inconsistencies between the political agreements reached in the course of peace negotiations and the financial resources available to implement them, thus fostering economic stabilization. Formulated as a joint effort involving existing or emerging authorities and the principal parties involved in the peace process, this macroeconomic framework can also be instrumental in ensuring proper use of the assistance provided by official and nongovernmental organizations.

During the immediate post-conflict phase, the focus of a government's economic policies should be to ensure that the priority expenditure required for peace building and reconstruction (including payments to demobilized soldiers, rehabilitation of war-damaged infrastructure, and the provision of basic social services) are programmed in a manner consistent with the need to return to a stable macroeconomic environment (appropriate budgetary and monetary policies, normalization of financial relations with creditors, including IFIs).

It is also essential that these public expenditures are clearly accounted for within a budget consistent with a) an available external budgetary and project support in line with the country's debt-servicing capacity (taking into account that donor funding is likely to taper off over time), and b) domestic financing that is noninflationary and does not pre-empt the capital needs of re-emerging private sector activity.

### **Reintegrating Uprooted Populations**

The forcible displacement of people is a clear indicator of conflict in society, of social insecurity, and of the inability of a government to protect its citizens. Conversely, the establishment of the rule of law, respect for human rights, civil peace, and security help to encourage the successful return, with dignity, and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons, and demobilized former combatants.

The presence of large numbers of refugees creates economic and social burdens for host neighbouring countries that can be politically destabilising. The safe and orderly return of refugees to their country of origin, where conditions allow, can be important to maintaining political stability in the region.

Reintegration is often the first major step towards national reconciliation. It must take place within a legal framework that includes guarantees for returning *bone fide* refugees and ex-combatants. Displaced people also need to be convinced that they will not be victimized when they return. The needs of uprooted populations must be addressed explicitly as part of peace negotiations to ensure that reintegration and demobilization strategies are part of the formal agreement. The responsibility of states for protecting their citizens, whether returning refugees or other war-affected groups, is a crucial consideration.

In addition to restoring basic security, reintegration priorities include access to water and sanitation; agricultural inputs, including credit to improve food production; transport and communications infrastructure; social services, such as health and education, as well as assistance in the field of legal and civil documentation. In this connection it is very important that recurrent costs related to public services (such as salaries for teachers and health workers) created under the reintegration phase be clearly accounted for when considering budgets for public expenditure, both at national and local levels. The resolution of disputes related to land-holding must be addressed as early as possible.

The process of reintegration cannot be initiated on a large scale until areas of return have been identified as safe or low-risk. Emergency mine surveys, mine clearance and awareness activities are a high priority in this context. Moreover, it is also clear that repatriation can be sustained only if consolidated by timely and effective development-oriented efforts on a much wider front. Operational linkages have to be established from the outset between returnee aid and development.

## **Demobilisation and Social Reintegration of Former Combatants**

The successful demobilization and reinsertion of former combatants in civilian life is a key to political stability and to rebuilding war-torn societies. In post-conflict situations, it is often a high priority for governments, which call for international assistance with various aspects of demobilisation programs.

Where demobilization has been poorly conducted, unpaid or undisciplined troops may turn to banditry, preying on villagers and road traffic, or even remobilize to form insurgencies challenging the established regime. Apart from its impact on political stability, the resulting insecurity can have devastating effects on economic activity. The challenge is to devise cost-effective demobilization programs that are satisfactory to the former combatants themselves.

Political circumstances in neighbouring countries can have a major influence on the success and credibility of national demobilization efforts, which must then be viewed in the wider context of political and military relations at a regional level. Providing support for the reintegration of former combatants presents donors with two special challenges:

- # First, some donors face legal restrictions in terms of support to military organizations, even for the purposes of demobilization and discharge.
- # Second, the lingering risks that hostilities will resume may be a strong deterrent to the funding of programs in support of demobilization.

At the same time, the knowledge that programs have been put in place to assist demobilized combatants may have helped bring about the demobilization agreement itself. Once agreements are reached, implementation must follow rapidly to reduce the risk of relapse into conflict. Lead time is necessary for preparing demobilization programs. Decisions to support them cannot await the conclusion of peace accords, but must be based on an assessment of the probable success of political negotiations.

## **The Clearing of Land Mines**

Few consequences of conflict in recent decades have been more traumatic than the death and maiming caused by land mines, often planted purposely in a random fashion. The great

majority of victims are innocent civilians in pursuit of their livelihoods. Though weapons of war, land mines continue to constitute a threat long after the armed conflict has abated.

The prevalent and unpredictable security threat posed by remaining mines is a major obstacle to the resumption of normal life and economic, social, and political development. The human suffering caused by land mines has become a matter of rising concern to the international community in the last decade. In facing the aftermath of a series of civil wars, humanitarian agencies are confronted with two critical challenges:

- # In the short run, major resources are required to attend to casualties needing medical care and physical rehabilitation
- # Over the long term, the task of identifying and removing the land mines over the whole territory affected will require considerable efforts and resources, probably extending over decades and diverting scarce resources that could otherwise be devoted to reconstruction and development.

A growing number of countries now hold that the case for banning the production, trade, and use of land mines is incontrovertible. The General Assembly of the United Nations has repeatedly called for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines, and the secretary-general has made a strong plea for introducing a total ban on the use of such mines. On a parallel track, the Ottawa Process aims for completion of an international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines.

### Notes

1. These critical areas of assistance are outlined in greater detail in the 1997 DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation. The full text of these Guidelines, which will continue to be refined, is available via Internet at <http://www.oecd.org/dac>, or by contacting the Secretariat directly.
2. Participating were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank. Invited organizations included the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA).